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**House of Representatives Public Health Policy Committee
Senate Bill 34—Sponsor Testimony
Wednesday, September 20, 2023**

Chairman Lipps, Vice Chair Stewart, Ranking Member Liston, and members of the House of Representatives Public Health Policy Committee, thank you for the opportunity to present sponsor testimony on Senate Bill 34.

Senate Bill 34 will bring awareness to a deadly and aggressive form of cancer, known as Sarcoma, by designating July as Sarcoma Awareness Month.

This legislation was crafted in response to my constituent, Amy Kabel, PhD, who lost her dog, Hank, to Sarcoma. Hank was diagnosed with an intrapelvic soft tissue sarcoma on February 1, 2013. Although Hank fought the cancer for over twenty months with radiation treatments and surgery, he unfortunately passed away. What Dr. Kabel discovered is that canine Sarcoma and human Sarcoma are very closely related.

After Hank's death, Dr. Kabel founded the Hank Kabel Foundation to raise awareness and funds for canine cancer and Sarcoma, in hopes that finding a cure for canine cancer will also lead to a cure for humans.

Sarcoma is a general term that describes a group of cancers that arise in the bone or soft tissues of the body. According to the American Cancer Society, about 13,040 new soft tissue sarcomas are diagnosed annually in humans, with approximately 5,150 Americans expected to die of this cancer.

Sarcoma accounts for 1% of cancer in adults and 15-20% of cancers in children. Surprisingly, dogs are five times more likely than humans to be diagnosed with Sarcoma. Approximately one in three dogs will be diagnosed with this cancer in their lifetime and 50% will die from this disease. Although this statistic is heartbreaking for our four legged friends, it does motivate us to search for a cure for humans.

Medical research has shown that dogs make good models that parallel human disease because cancer develops, grows, and responds to treatment in humans similarly; dogs and humans are 85% genetically identical. Finding successful treatments for dogs may lead to a cure for humans who have Sarcoma.

When thinking about cancer testing on animals your first thoughts may be of inhumane treatment of animals; however, this bill has nothing to do with that and does not advocate cruel animal testing. It is about finding a cure for our companions, which will ultimately lead to a cure for our children and adults. Veterinarians are studying dogs who have natural occurring cancers. Like humans, dogs are equally susceptible to the same environmental risks.

Although this bill is not the answer to finding a cure for Sarcoma, it is a great first step. This bill will provide awareness to those that are not familiar with how this disease affects both dogs and humans alike. If this awareness month is able to positively impact one Ohioan's life then it will be completely worth it.

Additionally, there was an amendment added during the Senate committee process that moves Parkinson's Disease Awareness Month to the month of April instead of September. This simple change aligns the state of Ohio with the National Parkinson's Disease Awareness Month and has the support of the Michael J. Fox Foundation.

Thank you once again, Chairman Lipps, and the members of the committee, for the opportunity to present this issue to you today. I will be pleased to answer any questions that the committee may have.